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ISAAC COOPER SLATER

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IN MEMORIAM

ISAAC COOPER SLATER

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FEBRUARY 25, 1843  
APRIL 8, 1907



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# **FUNERAL SERVICE**

**HELD IN THE CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION**

**THURSDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 11, 1907**

## HYMN

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“LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.”

Lead, kindly Light ! amid th' encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on ;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
Lead Thou me on ;  
Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou  
Shouldst lead me on ;  
I loved to choose and see my path ; but now  
Lead Thou me on ;  
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone ;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile !



## ADDRESS BY REV. JOHN WEIDLEY

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION

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“FOR HE WAS A GOOD MAN.”—*Acts xi, 24.*

Mr. Isaac Cooper Slater was born near Lovettsville, Loudoun County, Virginia, February 25th, 1843. He departed this mortal life April 8th, 1907, aged sixty-four years, one month and thirteen days.

In 1870 he was married to Miss Edith S. Harris, who died February 21st, 1903.

His son, Harris W. Slater, of New York, his daughter, Miss Helen Slater, of this city, his grandson, William House Slater, his sister, Mrs. Luther W. Slater, and his brother, William F. Slater, survive.

In early life he became a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was identified for a time with St. Paul's congregation, Eleventh Street, N. W.; transferred his membership, in 1869, to the mission on Capitol Hill, to which he gave his best service, and which developed into what is now the Church of the Reformation. His name appears first on the roll of membership.

Many years and to the time of his death he was Superintendent of the Sunday School. For this position he was endowed by nature and grace and study. In this, of all his public works, he will be most missed. He was generous and philanthropic in his thought for others; charitable in his disposition; ready to honor the views of his associates, whether officers, teachers or pupils, greatly concerned that all should have an equal chance. Truly, he was a good man!

He was a member of the Church Council and a Trustee of the congregation from the time of its organization. It was by his solicitation Dr. Parson, who was then employed as teacher in Japan, returned to this congregation, and ministered to it to the time of his home-going, a period of twenty-seven years.

It was his belief that a man's duty was to work for the larger interest of the Church and community. He served as a member and Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; was a Director of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., and a Trustee of the National Lutheran Home for the Aged, Washington, D. C. To this latter institution he freely gave his energy, his counsel and his time. The last work he did in an official capacity was for it. Verily, he was a good man!

As a diligent workman and public-spirited citizen he also excelled. For many years he was employed by the Government. The results of his wisdom in improved methods are yet in vogue, though it is many years since he left the service.

He voluntarily resigned his office to enter into partnership with the former second assistant to the Postmaster General, William B. Thompson, to do business before the several Departments of the Government. For twenty-three years this partnership was maintained under pleasantest auspices and with increasing success, so that partner and employee and those for whom business was transacted could always certify to the words of the text, He was a good man.

Through the sacred portals of the Christian home we must go with careful step. There it was he exercised those finer qualities and reflected those diviner traits that make a man really great. From it as a center radiated his tenderest affections. The community in which he lived felt the

force of his Christian conduct, and grieves as bitterly because of his sudden death as the members and relatives of his family. Who can estimate their loss? He was a priest of God, presiding in his family in such a manner as to make even the material things appear to be joyful. No note of pessimism rang from his lips. His heart was warm with love; his face reflected it as a mirror. Every one of the members believes it when we say, truly, he was a good man.

He had many secrets that were deep as the hidden soul, and they were gradually increasing every day. These were the treasures he laid up in Heaven. What were they? His many acts of kindness; his gifts in money; his fatherly advice to those who needed a helper and friend. He blew no trumpet. What he did for others was prompted by his love for them. There shall be many to rise up and call him blessed. They, too, will say, He was a good man!

Friends, we are in the presence of death! What can we do? It has robbed us of a father and friend. In this sense it is hateful. It is our great enemy. To destroy it God sent His Son, Jesus, who also had to pass through its ravages and lay in the silent tomb. But the glad Easter anthems are yet echoing, Christ is risen from the dead; Hallelujah! It is possible for us now to stand on the brink of the grave and triumphantly declare the Christian's challenge, Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory? Death is swallowed up in victory. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believeth in Him shall never die. We have hope in immortality.

"Like clouds that rake the mountain summits,  
Or waves that own no curbing hand,"

so generation follows generation into the land of the departed. We are hastening after the great multitude which



has passed on forever. Nothing rests here. "Nothing abides here. Change, decay, death are stamped upon all earthly things. Yet we crave the permanent and the immutable. Oh! for some rock amid the surging sea! Oh! for a refuge in the storm in which to find shelter and rest! God is our refuge and strength! The Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations."

Under the magic touch of Jesus' love it is possible for the human soul to accept its grave responsibility, no longer considering death as a titan specter robbing us of hope, but as a messenger of kindly though solemn mien, with trowel and plummet building up the temple of God.

We are not inclined to look upon man as a rogue. There is, let us hope, more good in the world than evil. But there is great demand for good men, everywhere, all the time; men who take life and living things at their worth, and, steadily yet resolutely, with malice toward none and charity for all, pursue an unquestioned course under the guidance of Almighty God! Such are missed and greatly mourned when called away from the field of their activity. It is these who write in unfading letters the language of our text, He was a good man!

Our hearts are troubled, and our lips tremble as we ask the question, What shall we do? or, Who can take his place? or, How can we hope to succeed without him? But our deepest sorrow may be tremulous with praises to our Heavenly Father for having granted unto us and the world a little while a life so helpful and grand as was Mr. Slater's! Thine be the glory, O righteous God! The workman dies. The work goes on! We will honor the dead best by emulating their virtues, and keeping alive the fires they kindled that shall make warm and generous the society in which we move even down to remotest generations! We sorrow not as those who have no hope. Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions.

Because I live ye shall live also. Sorrow must ennoble duty, not end it. The death of a friend exalts those who remain to weep.

“ So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan that moves  
To that mysterious realm where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon ; but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

## HYMN

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### CONSOLATION.

Come unto me, when shadows darkly gather,  
When the sad heart is weary and distressed,  
Seeking for comfort from your Heavenly Father,  
Come unto me, and I will give you rest.

Large are the mansions in thy Father's dwelling,  
Glad are the homes that sorrows never dim,  
Sweet are the harps in holy music swelling,  
Soft are the tones which raise the heavenly hymn.

There like an Eden blossoming in gladness,  
Bloom the fair flowers the earth too rudely pressed;  
Come unto me, all ye who droop in sadness,  
Come unto me, and I will give you rest.

## A TRIBUTE TO ISAAC COOPER SLATER

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When a beautiful and useful life has closed, it is a duty and a melancholy pleasure for those who remain to bear testimony to the worth of the loved one who has gone, and the writer undertakes the task the more willingly because, from early boyhood all through life, this beloved uncle was one of his closest and dearest friends, to whose wise counsel and helping hand he owes a debt of gratitude, and in whose company were passed many of his happiest moments.

As usually understood, Mr. Slater was a self-made man, that is, he made his own way with little help and despite the lack of many early advantages, such as a college education and the ease which comes from abundant means ; and yet, in another and very true sense, he was the direct product of his descent and his environment. His father and mother were both people of remarkably fine character and of decidedly marked intellectual ability. To one who is a grandson and who has known and studied their traits, it is very evident that Mr. Slater possessed in a high degree the best qualities of his parents—an unbending integrity, a kind and cheerful disposition, marked unselfishness and thoughtfulness for others, and a fine mind with a thorough grasp of affairs. Such an equipment meant success when opportunity offered. Although deprived of his mother while yet a little boy, he had the rare privilege of the fostering care of an older sister, the writer's own mother, who was one of God's saints upon earth, and whose influence for good in the implanting of high character and



noble ideals has been very marked upon all who came within its beneficent reach.

While yet a mere lad Mr. Slater began a business life as a clerk in a country store near his birthplace in Virginia. With increased years he embarked in business for himself at the town now known as Brunswick, Md., as a partner in a store there. This was in 1864. He and all his people were loyal to the Union, and so were marked in Loudoun County, where many of his relatives still lived. He was too young to enter the army, but, notwithstanding the fact of his being a civilian, he was, in company with other civilians, seized while on the way to visit a sister across the Potomac, and taken to Libby Prison, where he was detained for nearly a year. Owing to his youth and delicate physique, he was employed in the prison hospital, which somewhat mitigated the rigors of imprisonment, but his health was seriously impaired, and he felt the effects for many years.

Not long after the close of the Civil War, he entered the Post Office Department, where he spent nearly twenty years of his life. Although in those days position and advancement depended largely on influence, there was some reward for ability and industry, and Mr. Slater's efficiency, ability and thorough grasp of affairs soon attracted the attention of his chiefs, who advanced him from time to time until he became the Chief of the Railway Adjustment Division, a very important office, having purview of the compensation of the railways for carrying the mails. He made himself a master of the whole subject of mail transportation, not only at home but in foreign countries, and he was probably the foremost expert on this subject in our country. It was during his incumbency, and largely through his efforts, that a Commission, of which he was a member, was appointed in the early 80's to examine the whole subject of railway mail transportation and devise an equitable sys-



tem of compensation. On this Commission his complete knowledge of all the details made him an invaluable member.

In the performance of his duties he had been brought in close touch with many of the foremost railroad men, and his experience led him to believe that it would save them time and money to be represented by an expert in these, as they already were in other, lines of work. Accordingly, he resigned in December, 1884, and opened an office in Washington as an attorney for railroad work, at first for practicing before the Post Office Department. In March of 1885, his old friend and colleague, Col. Wm. B. Thompson, U. S. V., resigned from the Post Office Department, where he had been Second Assistant Postmaster General, and a partnership, Thompson & Slater, was formed which lasted, unbroken, until Mr. Slater's death. Col. Thompson, with tears in eyes, told the writer, on the day of the funeral, that in the twenty-two years of their association there had never been a disagreement or a harsh word between them. Surely a fine testimony to both of them! The members of the firm so fully enjoyed the confidence of their clients that their practice was gradually extended to all the Government Departments. They represented a large number of railroads and built up a prosperous business.

This is a brief account of one side of Mr. Slater's life, as a successful man of affairs, and with many men there would be little else to tell, but it was only a part of his life, the rest being far nobler because it represents working for others, the sacrifice of self, and working for the Master. He came from a family which, while entirely free from bigotry, has been noted for its strong religious feeling. His parents and every one of his brothers and sisters have been active in church work, but the same qualities which made him successful in worldly affairs brought him to the front

in church work. He was born and brought up a Lutheran, and spent his whole life in the church. At first, on his return to Washington, he was a member of old St. Paul's, but when the mission of that church on Capitol Hill was started, he became an active member. This was in the early 70's, so that he had been a member of the Church of the Reformation (which grew from the mission) for more than thirty-five years.

His affection for children led to his most important work being in the Sunday School, in which he held nearly every office, but of which, for more than a score of years, he had been Superintendent continuously. His heart was in the work, and he gave unstintingly of his time, his talents and his means to its success. No one knows all he did, for he was modest in the extreme, but all knew that a rare soul was doing his Master's work with a rare efficiency. Under his faithful guardianship the school had grown from a few score to more than three hundred pupils. It was most fitting that the last sad tribute of affection and respect should be paid in the room of the Sunday School where his presence had been such a power for good.

His church work was not confined to the Sunday School, for he was from the beginning a member of the church council, and he was a member of many of the general boards of the church, where his business ability was of greater value than even his benefactions, although his liberality was very great. One of his associates on these boards spoke of the great loss to them all.

This tells a little of what he did, but what of the man himself? He was one of the finest and most lovable of men. He never seemed so happy as when helping others, and this he did on a very large scale. It would be a multitude that could "rise up and call him blessed" if all to whom he had lent a helping hand gave their testimony. He had a cheerful, sunny disposition, and was a most companion-

able man. But his home life was his greatest enjoyment. He married in 1870 Miss Edith S. Harris, and their home life was almost ideal. Two children came to bless them, Harris W. Slater and Helen Slater (now Mrs. Wm. J. Mal-lory). The last years of his life brought heavy trials in the prolonged illness and death of his wife and in painful personal sickness, which finally culminated in his death.

He was only sixty-four when he died, and it seemed that life still had much for him in the way of work and of enjoyment. His children were a great credit to him, and he had a little grandson, to whom he was devoted. It seemed that he could not be spared. Yet his life had been a busy and most useful one, and he could think, as we can, that, having been given many talents, he had brought them back to the Master multiplied, and, when he passed through the gates, received the joyful welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

WALTER M. MCFARLAND.

*September, 1907.*





# MEMORIAL EXERCISES

OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE CHURCH  
OF THE REFORMATION



## ADDRESS BY MRS. MONROE

IN BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE  
REFORMATION

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My acquaintance with Mr. Slater began some time before I saw him, as I had considerable business with him as treasurer of the Board of Home Missions of the General Synod. I met him first in 1901, and at once recognized the same kindly, Christian spirit which pervaded his letters as correspondent.

Mr. Slater was recognized as the official leader of this church, not alone because he was the largest contributor, but because he gave of his time and talent to the interests of this church. His judgment was the final court of appeals in all disputed matters.

His genial spirit, his heartfelt prayers, his simple, child-like piety, his rare good judgment, his learning, his simple trust in God, these were the qualities which made him the chief support of this church. Concerning the important interests of this congregation, his brain was ever active. When he directed a forward movement, he did it in such an inspiring manner that each member was anxious to do his best.

He was cultured, charitable, courteous, humble, social, reverent and devout, having those qualities of mind and heart in such proportions as to make him useful in society and in his church.

“His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, ‘This was a man.’”

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## SUMMARY OF ADDRESS MADE BY MR. UNGER

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Our lives are a mixture of pleasure and sorrow. In this church we have suffered the loss of good men, such as Mr. John C. Parker and our pastor, Dr. W. E. Parson. In the time of grief Mr. Slater was the one to whom we looked for leadership. We had just begun to rejoice in our prosperity and to know that we had grown, numerically, financially and spiritually, when we were called upon to sustain another great loss in the death of our Superintendent, Mr. I. C. Slater.

His work in this school was a labor of love. Nearly all of the present officers and teachers have grown to be what they are and where they are under his guidance and direction as Superintendent. We miss him now, but the passing of the days and years will bring us to a full realization of our great loss.

He gave as liberally of his money as of his time. He placed his treasures where they will endure. He ruled not by command, but by sympathy. We are thankful for the many years of his useful life. It was a pleasure to know him and to be privileged to work with him. Let us imitate his example as we look to God for guidance and direction.



## ADDRESS BY MR. D. N. HOOVER, JR.

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This is the most fitting place for memorial exercises in honor of our late Superintendent, Mr. Isaac C. Slater, because here memories crowd upon us. As we are gathered here today, it is not difficult for our mind's eye to see him as he stood in various portions of this room, in council with some, greeting others, directing others, but always the same kindly Christian gentleman. I say this is the place of all places where it is proper to have a memorial service of the man, who stood so long before us, and who here did the most important part of his great life work.

As he stood at this desk Sunday after Sunday he gained, unconsciously to ourselves, a place in our hearts, which we did not know was so large until he was taken from us. No one ever stopped to think that some day he would be taken from us, because he had always stood at his place Sunday after Sunday.

Had I been told, as I sat as a boy in Miss Yount's class, about where Miss Hinckle's class now is, that some day I should assist in carrying Mr. Slater to his last resting place, I would not have believed the person who told me; yet, the very fact that there were men among those who were to carry him to his last resting place, who had been reared in this Sunday School under his ministrations, is the very best proof that his work here was a success. He had entered the work of this School a young man, and he lived to see children grow to man and womanhood, and engage in this same great enterprize to which he had so unselfishly given of his time and means.

It is a significant fact that the greatest men are the most simple and easy of approach. You have had the honor of looking Sunday after Sunday at a great man, a man who moved among men of affairs, and yet he was greater still, because with his prosperity and business cares he had not forgotten those of more humble merit, and he had found time to be a trainer of those in whom the future of this country is most vitally wrapped up—the children.

But why do great men live? Are they given to the world simply for themselves and for their families? Are they given to the world simply to head gigantic financial enterprises, or command armies, or to sit in the halls of state? Or is there not a greater reason for the life of a great man? I submit to you that great, good men are given to the world that their lives may be imitated and emulated. We cannot do better than to consciously imitate the sterling qualities possessed by our former superintendent. If we can have the quiet effective manner of work that he possessed; if we can have the strength to stand as faithful to a trust as he has stood; if we can have the kindly, gracious manner that he possessed, we will, all of us, be the better for possessing those qualities. But to emulate Mr. Slater's life most successfully we must, as did he, look to the life of the Great Teacher. We must look at Christ, the perfect One, and in so doing, we shall come to be more like Him, for it was to Jesus Christ of Nazareth that Mr. Slater looked, and by his looking reflected as much as a human being may, His great glory.

## ADDRESS BY MISS MCNALLY

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Thinking of Mr. Slater's relations with the children, there comes the thought that he, himself, had the heart of a little child. His character was simple and direct, his personal life pure and sweet, and his faith in God as unquestioning as that of a little child. He was a most lovable man.

Mr. Slater has left the children of our Sunday School a beautiful heritage in the example of his good life.

For many years he had labored in this school, with unselfish devotion and untiring generosity. He truly loved the work, and when last winter during the critical period following the death of our dear pastor, Dr. Parson, so many of us were discouraged, Mr. Slater led us wisely through the difficulties.

Now, again, with the loss of this dear friend and wise counsellor, it may seem that the good work must halt. On the contrary, I know of no better way to show our appreciation of this man's work than to continue it. We can in this manner raise a monument to the memory of our beloved superintendent, more beautiful than flowers, more fitting than words and more lasting than tablets of stone, and at the same time serve the God whom he loved and served so faithfully in this house.

A LETTER FROM HIS EARLY PASTOR AND LIFE-  
LONG FRIEND

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REV. JOHN WEIDLEY,  
138 C Street, Southeast,  
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR DOCTOR :

I am so shocked and distressed by the death of my dear friend and brother Slater that words cannot express my grief. I have known and esteemed and loved and trusted him ever since he came to the city. He was a true man, a genuine Christian, one of God's noblemen. Will you convey my tenderest sympathy to his sorely bereft family? Your loss as pastor, and the loss of the church which he loved so wisely and well, appears irreparable. God's ways are past finding out. He will give you grace sufficient for this overwhelming sorrow.

Yours, very truly,

J. G. BUTLER.



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